



Environmental Fact Sheet

EPA Amends Monitoring Well Requirements for Interim-Status Hazardous Waste Facilities

EPA is amending the standards applicable to owners and operators of interim-status hazardous waste facilities. In cases where physical obstacles prevent the placement of monitoring wells at the specified location, owners and operators of the facility may use an acceptable alternate location.

Background

Subtitle C of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) creates a comprehensive program for the safe management of hazardous waste. RCRA requires EPA to develop regulations for owners or operators of hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities (TSDFs).

In 1980, EPA created comprehensive standards for owners and operators of TSDFs that qualify for interim status (a short-term permitted status assigned to facilities in the process of applying for a final permit). Under these standards, interim status facility owners or operators operating certain management units must install and operate a system to monitor ground water for hazardous waste contamination. The system must include monitoring wells at specific points along the perimeter of the waste management area.

Action

In some existing waste management areas, certain physical obstacles (e.g., buildings, electric cables, highways) prevent the placement of monitoring wells near the perimeter. For this reason, EPA is amending the 1980 standards to allow alternate placement of downgradient monitoring wells. This amendment specifies that the alternate locations must be as close to the perimeter as practical, and must ensure detection of ground-water contamination as early as possible.

The facility owner or operator may make a demonstration of the need for and the proper placement of alternate wells. This demonstration must be certified by a "qualified ground-water scientist," as defined in the rule.

By allowing for minor alterations in monitoring well placement under certain conditions, the ground-water monitoring standards will provide greater flexibility to interim-status facilities, while maintaining the highest level of environmental protection.

For More Information

For further information, or to order a copy of the Federal Register notice announcing this action, please call the RCRA Hotline Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., EST.

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